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For Immediate Release...

Corrections News

June 3, 2008

Missouri Supreme
Court Justice
Michael Wolff will
deliver the keynote
address tomorrow
morning at a
Reentry conference
in downtown St.
Louis.

The Missouri
Reentry Process
(MRP) promotes
public safety and
reducing
victimization while
placing an
emphasis on
collaboration with
other state
agencies.

"I take pride in the
progress of MRP
and am committed
to this
philosophical
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Director Larry Crawford

Wolff to Deliver Keynote Address at Reentry Conference

Missouri Supreme Court Justice Michael Wolff will deliver the keynote address at 8:30 Wednesday morning at a Reentry conference in downtown St. Louis being hosted by the Missouri Department of Corrections. The conference, which runs from June 4-6, is titled "Missouri Reentry Process: Celebrating Success and Planning for the Future." The event will be held in the Mississippi Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza St. Louis at 200 North Fourth Street.

"We received a grant this year from the JEHT Foundation to provide training for about 300 upper level managers and administrators regarding Reentry," said Department Director Larry Crawford. "The training will be conducted by the Center for Effective Public Policy and will be intensive. It will focus on evidence-based practices, collaboration, case management and assessment, and motivating offenders and staff. Governor Blunt's leadership has helped make Missouri the leader on Reentry, and we continue to make progress."

Governor Matt Blunt signed a 2005 executive order creating the Missouri Reentry Process (MRP), which is a national model. Governor Blunt presented the Service Excellence Award to the Missouri Department of Corrections during the 2007 Governor's Conference on Economic Development. The Service Excellence Award was presented to the MRP to recognize collaborative excellence by a group of partners who have designed service excellence initiatives that have effectively served unique populations in the workforce system.

One of the biggest issues facing the Department is the successful management of offenders in prison and under supervision, and the early results of MRP are encouraging. There are currently 29,991 prisoners in Missouri, while approximately 70,000 are on probation or parole. Since the Reentry process began in July 2005, there have been over 6,800 offenders released who have completed the process during a five to six month stay in a Transitional Housing Unit. The recidivism rate after 12 months for those offenders is 11 percent lower than other offenders released in the same time period (24 percent compared to 35 percent). MRP is one of the Department of Corrections' initiatives credited with reducing the overall recidivism rate of all offenders released since July 2005. From Fiscal Year 2005, the 12-month recidivism rate has declined from 35 to 31 percent for offenders who were released in Fiscal Year 2007.

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The reduction in recidivism is one reason why the Missouri prison population growth has been negative in recent years. According to the latest Bureau of Justice Statistics Prisoners Report, the U.S. prison population grew by 2.8 percent in 2006 while Missouri's prison population declined by 2.1 percent. In Fiscal Year 2008, Missouri's prison population remains unchanged and continues to be about 700 offenders less than the peak population in October 2005. Other initiatives impacting the population growth are the recommended sentences developed by the Missouri Sentencing Advisory Commission with the Department of Corrections and the revision to Probation and Parole supervision practices, which has reduced the number of parole law violators. Crime rates among probationers and parolees have decreased for three straight years.

"Because recidivism is a threat to public safety and a burden on taxpayers, it's crucial for the Department to continue to enhance our efforts to assist offenders to become successful," said Crawford. "I take pride in the progress of MRP and am committed to this philosophical change in the way we do business."

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